

Our number one priority at Southwest Key Programs is to keep the children in our care safe. We have built a thorough infrastructure of both preventative and responsive measures in order to ensure their safety.

During our hiring process, we fully comply with all background and fingerprint checks of the staff we employ, and we go above and beyond to train every employee on issues such as their legal obligation as mandated reporters of abuse or neglect, appropriate boundaries, situational awareness, bystander training and many others.

In addition to vetting and training our staff, we educate every minor in our care of their right to be free from abuse or neglect in our program and in this country. *This message is shared with them upon arrival and repeated to the children throughout the duration of their stay at our shelters.* Included in that education is making sure each minor knows the difference between appropriate touches and inappropriate touches and our employees empower every minor to report any incident they experience or witness that they feel violates appropriate touching.

The children also have access to phones at all times in every one of our facilities. These phones are pre-programmed to call 911, Child Protective Services and ORR so that they can report an immediate situation in which they feel uncomfortable or in danger. Southwest Key also has a Department of Internal Review, and this team is dedicated to evaluating each and every allegation within the shelters and conducts independent investigations as necessary. These are just a few of the methods we employ to prevent abuse and neglect in our shelters as we take this part of our work very seriously.

Southwest Key Programs does extensive work to prevent all forms of abuse. When these rare situations occur, all staff involved adhere to our strict protocols. We alert ORR, HHS, OIG, state regulators and law enforcement. We do internal reviews and we act immediately, without fail, as soon as we are made aware of a problem until the situation is fully dealt with to the extent it calls for.

Our twenty-year history of taking care of children shows that when we see a problem, we report it, we fix it and we do it immediately.